



County of Los Angeles  
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES

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DAVID SANDERS, Ph.D.  
Director

June 23, 2005

To: Supervisor Gloria Molina, Chair  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich, Chair Pro Tem  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe

Board of Supervisors  
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From: David Sanders, Ph.D.  
Director

**MAY 17, 2005 BOARD AGENDA ITEM #2 – MOTION BY SUPERVISOR GLORIA MOLINA re: ERCP OVERSTAYS, AS AMENDED BY SUPERVISOR DON KNABE AND SUPERVISOR GLORIA MOLINA**

**INTRODUCTION**

On May 17, 2005, the Board instructed the Director of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to:

- Report to the Board within seven days on immediate steps taken to address Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP) "overstays," including increasing the availability of emergency shelter beds;
- Provide monthly reports for the next year, which track the numbers of emergency shelter beds and the length of time children spend waiting for placement;
- Provide a 30-day report regarding possible short-term and long-term solutions to (Emergency Response Command Post) overstays, with attention to placement needs of the more difficult-to-place children and youth;
- Work in collaboration with the Association of Community Human Services Agencies (ACHSA) and group homes on the assessment of placement processes to identify and resolve barriers to successful placement of these youth.

On May 24, 2005, DCFS submitted its seven-day report to the Board, which included the monthly statistics for April 2005. This is to provide a 30-day report regarding possible short-term and long-term solutions to ERCP overstays, with attention to the placement needs of the more difficult-to-place children and youth; a progress report regarding DCFS' collaboration with ACHSA; and the monthly statistics for May 2005.

## **SCOPE OF PROBLEM**

The Department acknowledges that a percentage of children and youth who come to the ERCP have continued to stay at ERCP for four or more hours as they await placement; and continues to work diligently to develop resolution to the issue. The safe and stable placement of children requiring out-of-home care is a core value of DCFS. In collaboration with public and private community partners, we are engaged in a series of activities that support recruitment of placement resources for children and youth who present special placement challenges. Most often, the population of children described in the overstay reports are "difficult-to-place" children with current behaviors that present serious risks to their health and safety, such as violent interactions with others, illegal drug consumption, gang involvement, or chronic runaway episodes. This population also includes parenting teenagers and dependent children over the age of 18 years who do not meet the licensing provisions for residence in our emergency shelters.

## **SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS**

To date, the Department has conducted two orientation meetings, on May 17, 2005 and May 18, 2005, for the purpose of recruiting licensed foster parents interested in contracting with the Emergency Shelter Care (ESC) program. These orientation meetings were a collaborative effort between the DCFS - Office of the Medical Director, ERCP, Out-of-Home Care Management Unit and Contracts Division; and the Department of Mental Health. Two additional recruitment meetings have been scheduled to take place on June 28, 2005 and June 29, 2005.

As a result of the orientation meetings, we have recruited/contracted two additional ESC foster homes for a total of four beds for male or female teenagers, ages 13 to 17. This addition gives us a total of 58 ESC foster home beds available on a 24/7 basis, of which 22 beds are available for male or female teenagers, ages 13 to 17. Further, David and Margaret Group Home has offered 10 beds on a 24/7 basis for female teenagers, ages 13 to 17. The 10 beds are targeted to become available on June 27, 2005. Nineteen (19) foster family agencies have made their vacant beds for males and females, ages 13 to 17, available on a 24/7 basis. However, we are unable to provide a total foster family agency bed availability count as this count changes on a daily basis determined by utilization during normal business hours.

These additional emergency placement beds are being recruited to provide placement resources for male and female teens, ages 13 to 17. The availability of emergency shelter beds in foster family agency-certified homes and group homes will allow for a higher level of care than those in foster family homes. We continue, however, to develop measures to serve youth ages 18 and 19, who need emergency shelter placement in facilities licensed for the placement of children and youth, ages 0 to 17. In the interim, the Resource Utilization Management Section within the DCFS Out-of-Home Care Management Division is now available on a 24/7 basis to deal with resource issues.

As such, we anticipate that the availability of the ESC beds will be sufficient to eliminate youth awaiting placement at the ERCP beyond 12 hours. ERCP, Out-of-Home Care Management and regional staff will be continuously working with the shelter care resources to monitor activities and utilize a team decision-making process to make decisions to replace youth into a more stable and permanent environment. DCFS management will closely monitor those circumstances when placement does not occur and will make the necessary corrections.

### **LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS**

The ERCP held a planning meeting on Wednesday, June 22, 2005, for the purpose of developing strategies to monitor and track the successful long-term placement of children and youth. One of the goals of this meeting was to begin the process of revising our current method of monitoring the entire time during which children and youth await placement when that time includes a stay at ERCP. Additionally, ERCP will be conducting a retraining module for staff with the desired outcome of maximizing the cultivation, utilization and maintenance of viable emergency placement beds for difficult-to-place youth. During our analysis of the ERCP overstay problem, we discovered that some ERCP overstay were attributed to youth refusing placement(s). As a result, this training will also focus on the measures and procedures by which ERCP staff will successfully manage placement processes to assure that youth who refuse placement(s) are indeed placed in stable environments in a timely manner.

Efforts to develop more appropriate short-term and long-term viable placement resources also include the Department's collaboration with the Association of Community Human Services Agencies (ACHSA). To this end, three DCFS/ACHSA co-led workgroups are currently in progress, as follows:

- (1) The Intake Receiving Center Workgroup, which has already met on June 8, 2005, is addressing the possible development of child-friendly intake receiving centers. The date of the next workgroup meeting will be determined.
- (2) The Crisis Beds Workgroup, scheduled to meet on June 30, 2005, July 12, 2005 and July 19, 2005, will be addressing the development of additional crisis beds in L.A. County.
- (3) The Individualized Contracting Workgroup, scheduled to meet on July 18, 2005, will be addressing the specialized placement needs of the most difficult-to-place population through the development of a formal, individualized contracting process with community agencies.

## **CONCLUSION**

DCFS sincerely appreciates the Board's attention to this very serious issue and continues to aggressively pursue corrective actions that support short-term and long-term solutions to reducing ERCP overstay. Attached please find the monthly statistical report that reflects ERCP overstay for the month of May 2005. Monthly statistical reports will continue to be submitted to the Board in accordance with the Board's directive. However, in recognition of the need to further develop, refine and finalize the short-term and long-term solutions currently in progress, we will submit another progress report to the Board within 60 days.

Should you have further questions, please feel free to contact me at (213) 351-5600 or your staff may contact Helen Berberian, Board Relations Manager at (213) 351-5530.

DS:AW:gk

Attachment

c: County Counsel  
Chief Administrative Officer  
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMAND POST'S MONTHLY OVERSTAY REPORT – MINORS AT ERCP MAY 2005

**Numbers of Children and Youth who came to ERCP by age and Gender:**

**Total: 102**

0-10 years		11-14 years		15-18 years		19 and over	
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
9	9	17	21	24	22	0	0

**Numbers of children and youth who stayed 4 hours and longer by age:**

**Total: 47 (48%)**

Hours	0-10 years	11-14 years	15-18 years	19 and over	
4 to 8	1	13	15	0	
9 to 13	1	5	6	0	
14 to 19	0	1	3	0	
20 to 23	0	0	0	0	
24 to 28	0	0	1	0	
29 to 32	0	0	0	0	
33 and over	0	1	0	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>TOTAL 47</b>

**Children and youth's placement prior to stay at ERCP:**

Placement	0-10 years	11-14 years	15-18 years	19 and over	
Home of parent	2	2	2	0	
Adoptive parent	0	0	0	0	
Home of Relative	0	1	3	0	
Foster Home	0	5	3	0	
Group Home	0	2	2	0	
AWOL	0	8	9	0	
Hospital	0	0	0	0	
Probation	0	2	3	0	
Regional Office	0	1	2	0	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>TOTAL 47</b>

**Children and Youth's placement following their stay at ERCP:**

Placement	0-10 years	11-14 years	15-18 years	19 and over	
Home of Relative	0	3	1	0	
Foster Home	2	6	7	0	
Group Home	0	3	0	0	
AWOL	0	0	3	0	
*Regional Office Placements	0	8	14	0	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>47</b>

**\*Per agreement between ERCP and the regional offices, these youth were replaced by their case carrying CSWs.**

**GK/gk  
Attachment I  
06/14/05**